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Community Relations Minutes 07/07/2008

Approved August 5, 2008

Community Relations Subcommittee
July 7, 2008, 2008 – Meeting #4
-Minutes-

In attendance: Jeff Thielman, Subcommittee Chair
Ron Spangler, Subcommittee Member
Sue Sheffler, Subcommittee Member
Steve Mazzola, Director of Technology
Kathy Bodie, Assistant Superintendent

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

1. The minutes of the June 18, 2008 meeting were approved. **Motion by Ron Spangler, second by Sue Sheffler. Approved 3-0.**
2. Discussion on making the Policy Manual more user friendly on the APS Website
 - Mr. Spangler reported that last year the Policies and Procedures Subcommittee, which he headed, researched the possibility of having the MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees) host the Policy Manual. According to the MASC website, 12 districts host their policy manuals on the site. The set-up fee is \$3500 to start (plus costs depending on the manual's size and format and the amount of training needed), and a \$850 per year hosting fee.
 - Given the district's tight budget, the Community Relations Subcommittee asked Steve Mazzola if his department could create a searchable HTML file of the Policy Manual that would be hosted on the APS site. Mr. Mazzola said he would see if Claudia Bertoli, a contracted employee in his office, could do this.
 - Mr. Mazzola agreed to get back to Mr. Thielman with an answer by the end of this week. He noted that the scope and cost of work to be done by Ms. Bertoli would have to be approved by Superintendent Levenson.
 - Mr. Thielman, Mr. Spangler, and Ms. Sheffler thanked Mr. Mazzola for his seven plus years of service to the Arlington Public Schools. He will be leaving Arlington on August 8th for a new job in Belmont.
3. Role of School Liaisons
 - Mr. Thielman stated that a question had been raised at the last School Committee meeting (June 24, 2008) regarding how members should keep their colleagues and the public informed of work they are doing as liaisons to the district's nine schools.
 - Mr. Spangler said the role of the liaisons was outlined in the Subcommittee/Liaison assignments document approved by the School Committee in April. The document asks liaisons to a) Connect w/school PTO or parent group, provide contact information and offer to attend meetings to provide district updates, and b) Attend school events and be available to respond to questions.
 - The sense of the Community Relations Subcommittee was that during the subcommittee report time or other point in the agenda of the regular School Committee meetings there ought to be time for members to report on any issues they are responding to in their role as liaison.
 - Mr. Thielman suggested that it would make sense to look at Policy BEDB (Agenda Format) to see if the committee should add reports from subcommittees and school liaisons to the regular agenda. Mr. Spangler said he would look at our policies, see how other districts approach liaison reporting, and report back to the Community Relations Subcommittee at its next meeting.
4. University Partnerships
 - Ms. Bodie and Mr. Thielman developed a report summarizing partnerships the district has with local colleges and universities (see Appendix A).
 - Mr. Thielman said a benefit of compiling and publishing this data in the minutes is that the public would learn

about these partnerships. It may encourage community members to come forward with ideas on how to further develop ways local universities can help the Arlington Public Schools.

- Mr. Thielman asked about Lesley University's relationship with the Arlington Public Schools. Ms. Bodie said that Carole Brandon, the Coordinator of Field Placement for Undergraduate Programs at Lesley sends student teachers to Arlington, working mostly in elementary schools (Dallin, Bracket, Thompson, and Hardy).
- Mr. Thielman reported that School Committee Chairwoman Denise Burns told him that several APS teachers take courses at Cambridge College. Ms. Bodie said this was true but the district does not have a formal partnership with Cambridge College.
- The subcommittee then discussed ways to leverage and enhance partnerships with local universities. Mr. Spangler pointed out that Harvard and MIT needed to have good relations with Cambridge because the universities were located in those cities, used city services, and interact regularly with city officials. He added that Paul Paravano, an APS parent who works in the MIT Community Relations Office, is ready to assist the Arlington Public Schools new Science and Technology Program and Capstone Program.
- Mr. Thielman stated that he knows Mary Power, the Chief of Community Relations for Harvard University and could arrange a meeting with her to explore ways to strengthen ties.
- Ms. Sheffler said it would be good to present to Harvard and possibly other local universities the benefits they receive from the Arlington Public Schools as a starting point of a discussion about how local universities can provide more assistance to APS. Ms. Bodie said she would check with English Language Learner Director Jill McCarthy to see how many ELL parents are graduate or post-doctoral students at local universities. Mr. Spangler said he could get a list of Harvard University faculty who live in Arlington. Perhaps some have children in the Arlington Public Schools.
- Mr. Spangler and Ms. Bodie agreed to share their findings with the subcommittee by its next meeting.

5. Old Business

- There was no new information on discussions regarding the establishment of a Parmenter/Crosby Advisory Committee and a process for deciding whether to declare the properties permanent surplus. Mr. Thielman said the Committee would await any action by the Board of Selectmen on a proposed timeline he understood Mr. Sullivan would be presenting at a summer meeting of the BOS. He stated that the next logical step would be a communication from BOS Chair Clarissa Rowe to SC Chair Denise Burns on this matter.
- Mr. Thielman reported that following the June 18th Community Relations Subcommittee meeting he sent an email to Mr. Sullivan indicating dates he was available for a State Aid Task Force Meeting. Mr. Sullivan discussed calling another meeting of the Task Force at the June 18th meeting. Mr. Thielman said that as of today (July 7, 2008) he has not received word of a meeting.
- Ms. Sheffler suggested that the subcommittee draft a statement indicating why the current Chapter 70 formula hurts Arlington. Mr. Spangler stated that it would be helpful for all members of the committee to have the same information on the defects of the formula vis-à-vis Arlington when talking with state legislators and state officials. Mr. Thielman agreed to put a statement together for review and discussion at the next Community Relations Subcommittee meeting.
- Mr. Spangler suggested that the statement also include how the town is impacted by the state aid formula.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m. Motion by Mr. Spangler, second by Ms. Sheffler. Approved 3-0.

Next Meeting: Friday, August 1, 2008 at 8:30 a.m. in the School Committee Room

Contact Information of Attendees to today's meeting

Name	Affiliation	Email
Kathy Bodie	Assistant Superintendent	kbodie@arlington.k12.ma.us
Steve Mazzola	Director of Technology	smazzola@arlington.k12.ma.us

Appendix A:

Notes on University Partnerships July 7, 2008 Report

The following are benefits from partnerships with universities:

1. Professional Development – provides opportunities for teachers to earn portable professional development credits (PDPs) at workshops at local universities.
2. Opportunities for teachers to earn credit towards advanced degrees, with grants awarded by colleges/universities
3. Student Teachers free staff up to do other things
4. Student teachers the District likes may be hired to work full-time.

Below are our main University partners:

1. Brandeis

- The university works closely with five districts, including Arlington. Brandeis will place five student teachers in Arlington Public Schools next year. In the Brandeis program, student teachers observe first semester and teach second semester.
- Judy Malone Neville teaches a multi-teacher, interdisciplinary course in Greek Studies at Brandeis.
- Two APS teachers are receiving a \$1,900 stipend and earning graduate credit in a program funded by the federal government, but this is last year of the grant.

2. MIT

- Arlington parent Paul Parravano is the Director of Community Relations for MIT and has been very helpful.
- Paul has introduced APS to the Edgerton Center, which provides hands-on instruction to science teachers.
- Kathy sees this program growing over time.

3. Harvard Divinity School

- Six Harvard Divinity students will be student teachers next year.

4. Harvard University Outreach Center for Middle Eastern Studies

- Provides materials, guest speakers, and courses to three 7th Grade World Geography teachers at the Ottoson Middle School.
- A speaker is coming in soon who will talk to kids about why Muslim women often wear a veil, and other aspects of Islamic daily life.~
- Two of the three teachers (Roni Tivnan and Andrew Garrity) were selected by the Israeli consulate to be sponsored for a free graduate course on the history and culture of Israel. Both teachers completed the course this spring.

5. Harvard Business School

- Superintendent Levenson has contacts there and among the alumni that may be helpful.
- The District has applied for Business School students/graduates to provide consultation on budget analysis.

6. Boston University

- Noyce Foundation grant allows first or second year teachers from APS to get masters program or could place students enrolled in BU masters program in Arlington as full-time teachers.
- NSF that provides professional development in mathematics for teachers in grades 5-12
- Title 2A through the DOE (will know if awarded this summer) – will provide professional development in teaching mathematics for teachers in grades K-8.
- Student teachers
- U-Mass Lowell, Lesley, WPI (for 4yrs.) have all been partners in the FOM grant.

7. Simmons

- Sends student teachers and graduate students

8. Others that send student teachers include: Boston College (infrequently), Tufts, UMASS-Boston, Wheelock, Lesley.